United Nations A/64/PV.87

General Assembly
Sixty-fourth session

Official Records

87th plenary meeting
Thursday, 20 May 2010, 10 a.m.
New York

President: Mr. Ali Abdussalam Treki ..... (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya)

In the absence of the President, Ms. Štiglic (Slovenia), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 10.25 a.m.

Agenda items 48 and 114 (*continued*)

Integrated and coordinated implementation of and follow-up to the outcomes of the major United Nations conferences and summits in the economic, social and related fields

Follow-up to the outcome of the Millennium Summit

Report of the Secretary-General (A/64/701)

The Acting President: Members will recall that that General Assembly held a debate on agenda item 48, jointly with agenda items 114, 120 and 121, at its 47th plenary meeting, on 16 November 2009. Members will also recall that, under agenda items 48 and 114, the Assembly adopted resolution 64/184 at its 66th plenary meeting, on 21 December 2009, as well as decision 64/555 at its 82nd plenary meeting, on 15 April 2010.

It is my pleasure to welcome members to the formal debate and panel discussion to consider the report of the Secretary-General on human security under agenda items 48 and 114 (A/64/701). I would like to extend my gratitude to the Secretary-General for this timely report. My thanks also go to Member States that have provided valuable support in preparing for this debate.

The report of the Secretary-General on human security has been prepared as the follow-up to paragraph 143 of the 2005 World Summit Outcome (resolution 60/1), in which heads of State and Government unanimously recognized that all individuals, in particular vulnerable people, are entitled to freedom from fear and freedom from want, with an equal opportunity to enjoy all their rights and fully develop their human potential. They also agreed to further discuss the notion of human security in the General Assembly.

To that end, significant efforts have been made by Member States over the past five years. In May 2008, the General Assembly gathered for an informal thematic debate dedicated to the concept of human security. Some 40 Member States took the floor during the debate to reflect on the scope of the concept and to further explore ways to follow up on the reference to human security in the 2005 World Summit Outcome document. Meanwhile, the Friends of Human Security and the Human Security Network have contributed greatly to the clarifying conceptual discussions and to advancing operational aspects of human security.

Today's formal debate and panel discussion is an opportune moment to reflect on that progress and move our discussion forward. To guide us in that endeavour, we have a most distinguished panel, whose members share a wealth of knowledge on the concept of human security. I would like to welcome them and thank them all for their participation. I wish the Assembly a most fruitful and successful discussion and look forward to

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hearing the outcome of its deliberations over the coming two days.

I now give the floor to the Secretary-General, His Excellency Mr. Ban Ki-moon.

The Secretary-General: I want to express my appreciation to the President of the General Assembly for convening this important thematic debate and panel discussion on human security. Five years ago, heads of State and Government committed themselves to discuss and define the notion of human security. I want to thank Member States for their hard work in advancing the understanding of this important concept.

We are living in an interconnected world. Today's crises transcend borders and threaten the lives and livelihoods of billions of men, women and children around the globe. No region has been left untouched; no country is immune. The economic and financial crisis has disrupted jobs and economic security in both developed and developing countries. The food-price crisis has left over 1 billion people hungry, and more than 17,000 children are dying of malnutrition every day. Last year, over 200 million people were affected by natural disasters, and violent conflicts have displaced a record 42 million people. Meanwhile, the recent H1N1 flu pandemic has highlighted the human and economic costs of health emergencies. Today, it is increasingly clear that the health of one community has serious implications for the health of all communities.

Our challenges are shared. So, too, is our commitment to enhance freedom from fear, freedom from want and freedom to live in dignity for all. That is why my report calls for an expanded understanding of security where the protection and empowerment of people form the basis and the purpose of our actions. We must ensure that the gains of today are not lost to the crises of tomorrow. So, our actions must focus on people-centred, comprehensive, context-specific and preventive strategies at every level.

That is the human security approach. Human security is fully in line with the provisions of the United Nations Charter. The concept strengthens State sovereignty by providing Governments with effective tools that look at root causes of persistent and emerging threats. As a result, human security supports early warning systems that diminish the impact of such threats. The focus is on building Government and local capacities by identifying the concrete needs of populations under stress, developing solutions that are rooted in local realities and building partnerships that are targeted and cost-effective and that capitalize on comparative advantages. That combination not only improves the resilience of Governments and people to insecurities; it contributes to greater human, national, regional and international security.

Such an understanding of human security is also at the core of the work of the United Nations. Significant progress has been made to integrate human security into the work of the Organization. The United Nations Trust Fund for Human Security has provided resources to rebuild war-torn societies, prevent, mitigate and respond to natural disasters and strengthen food security. It has also invested in improving access to health care and education in times of crisis, and in mobilizing community leadership.

Human security is also an important tool for advancing our efforts to build one United Nations. In a project implemented in Tanzania, for example, it was noted that the human security approach required United Nations organizations to work as one and to combine their respective expertise. That helped to further strengthen the impact of the project.

Instead of adding layers to the work of the United Nations, human security provides the Organization with a framework to capitalize on our comparative advantages, to bolster our actions, to galvanize our work and to revitalize our partnership. Let us continue our combined efforts to strengthen the political, social, environmental, economic and cultural systems that are the building blocks of stability, security and human dignity.

I wish members a successful discussion and debate on this important concept.

The Acting President: I thank the Secretary-General for his statement.

Before adjourning, may I remind members that, as announced in today's *Journal*, there will be a panel discussion, entitled "People-centred approaches: the added value of human security", in the General Assembly Hall immediately following this meeting.

The meeting rose at 10.35 a.m.